



Satellite image of the Aral Sea region, April 18, 2003, showing salt and dust from the dried bottom of the former sea being blown by strong northeast winds and carried across the sea and across the Amu Dar'ya delta. A loose layer of fine salt and dust particles that are very susceptible to long distance airborne transport covers extensive parts of the dried bottom. The dust and salt settle over a large area adjacent to the Aral Sea, harming natural ecosystems, crops, and human health. (Data from the MODIS instrument on the Aqua satellite.)